Development of Golden Rice

4344. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the University of Agriculture Science, Bangalore, has come forward for development of 'Golden Rice* in our country to solve the malnutrition in rural India;

(b) if so, details of the status thereof; and

(c) whether Government consider encouragement of this in rural focused programmes if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A project proposal on 'Evaluation and Bio-safety Assessment of Golden Rice for cultivation and Consumption in Karnataka' has been submitted by University of Agriculture Science (UAS), Bangalore, to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Karnataka State Department of Agriculture (KSD A) for funding by the State Government during January; 2003. The approval of the project is awaited. For implementation of the project, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between International Rice Research Institute, Philipines and UAS, Bangalore during April 2003.

(c) As the Golden Rice with Beta-Carotene rich endosperm has not yet been developed in Indica background which is suitable for growing in Indian conditions, the question of its encouragement in rural programme at this stage does not arise.

Assistance to KVKs

4345. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) functioning in the country alongwith the financial allocation made for each KVKs;

(b) whether the functioning of the KVKs are very useful to the agriculturists;

(c) if so, whether Government would come forward to set up more KVKs and release necessary financial assistance in the current financial year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?